

**LACDMH DOCTORS PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE DATABASE TO PREVENT
PATIENT DRUG ABUSE AND OVERDOSE
By Karen Zarsadias-Ige, Public Information Officer II**

Efforts are currently underway to register physicians at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) with the statewide CURES program. CURES is a database used to track painkillers (e.g., OxyContin and Vicodin) and other narcotics prescriptions throughout California. It was developed to curb drug abuse and deaths by overdose.

"I think that the key value of the CURES program for LACDMH is that it allows LACDMH prescribers to provide services in a safer and more effective manner," explained LACDMH Medical Director Roderick Shaner, M.D. "LACDMH prescribers can now determine whether clients have filled prescriptions by other providers that may be abused. Knowing this information can help LACDMH clinicians to better address substance use issues, and ensure that our own prescribing does not create dangers of adverse interaction with other medication. In the future, accessing CURES may be an expected component of quality clinical practice, so this ensures that LACDMH stays well-ahead of the curve."

So far, nearly half of LACDMH's doctors have registered for the CURES program through the Department of Justice. More are expected to join the program. Practitioners started submitting paperwork at a recent meeting in June.

"The CURES program has recently undertaken steps to make it more accessible and useful to practitioners," said Dr. Shaner. "The presence of the CURES program at the Spring Physicians' Quarterly Meeting was very helpful as prescribers could submit application materials without needing to secure the services of a notary public. We hope that the State will continue to fund the CURES program at a level that will ensure its usefulness."

California's budget crisis cut funding in previous years. Now, more funding is being sought to continue, improve and upgrade the CURES program. The California Senate and Assembly are looking at ways to keep it funded and running in the future.